

COURSE SYLLABUS

ENGLISH 50 OFFLINE

Spring 2008

Instructor: Mr. Bill Devine

661-763-7883

Distance Learning Course

No Prerequisite, but the successful completion of English 55 is recommended.

Learning College: This course is designed to emphasize student learning. Given that it is a distance learning course, the lecture format is already out the window. Though you undoubtedly miss many pearls of wisdom by not interacting in a classroom environment, this format does place responsibility for learning right where it belongs: the student. This means each student must carefully read the syllabus, the text, and my responses to do assignments correctly and increase their skill level. By the end of the semester, students will have demonstrated what they have learned through writing and grammar assignments. The text is designed to help you understand each part of the course, each writing assignment and test. If the text is not clear to you at any point, please contact me for further advice or clarification. Distance learning can be a challenging format, but it is less challenging for those students who are motivated to succeed on their own and who are the most self-reliant in terms of study habits and *seeking* knowledge.

Students have the opportunity in this class to create their own best learning environment.

Course Description: This is a college preparatory course for those students whose placement test scores indicate a need for a review of the mechanics of written composition: sentence structure, punctuation, vocabulary, and spelling. This course includes intensive training in paragraph and essay writing, reading for understanding, and learning the grammatical aspects of the English language. Students must pass this course to graduate from Taft College. For this reason, it represents the writing standards for the college, and students who pass the class must be expected to have achieved a minimum level of competency in writing.

Textbook and Required Materials:

Sentences, Paragraphs, and Beyond 5th edition written by Lee Brandon and Kelly Brandon (available in the TC bookstore).

Students must have access to a computer with Word for writing assignments sent as attachments to an email. Hard copies of assignments can alternately be given to the staff in the LRC to be filed in my folder there. If you have any questions about your assignments, do not ask the staff in the LRC, call or email the instructor of the course. It is possible but more difficult to send assignments via US postal service.

Suggested Texts and Materials:

Roget's Thesaurus (available on the Internet) is an enriching source for finding the right word

A Dictionary (available on the Internet) can be helpful to verify the meanings of words and to check spelling if a spell-checker is not an option or if the spell-checker's ability to nuance the correct word is in doubt.

A computer disk is useful for storing work done on computers (available in student store).

Grading System:

I will average the points you earn from your assignments and tests by the total points possible to give me a percentage which corresponds to a standard letter grade.

Attendance:

This is based on the student's ability to turn assignments in on time and to keep the instructor informed. The instructor may drop students who do not turn in assignments when they are due.

However, I have traditionally been quite flexible with students who communicate their particular situation with me as much in advance as possible, but students must realize that falling behind on one assignment has a domino effect on the rest of the assignments for the semester. If a student stops turning in assignments, I will not automatically drop them before the deadline; it is the student's responsibility to drop the course should that be necessary. I will not accept assignments more than one week late for any reason. Distance Learning requires a lot of discipline because there are no reminders from the instructor like a student would receive in a face-to-face class. If you can't keep up for any reason, please contact me at bdevine@taft.org.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Week 1 (due on February 4)

Read the student overview (pages 2-7); read chapter 1, working each exercise for your own benefit. Write a two-part response to "Everyone Pays the Price" by Hadley McGraw composed of a **summary and a reaction (label each part separately for this assignment) and turn that in.**

The Teacher's Perspective: writing a summary is the beginning of analysis because it demands that you adopt an objective viewpoint in interpreting what the author said. It has none of your own opinion, if done correctly. The reaction demands that you make connections between the themes of the text and your own life experience. This is another level of analysis, one that students use more and more as their college education develops. The culmination of this process for most students is the research paper, which demands a continual synthesis of summary and analysis. You do not write a research paper in this class, but hopefully it prepares you for that writing process with the two-part response assignments and the more complete Expository Essays that follow.

Review Writer's Guidelines for chapter 1 for your own benefit.

Week 2 (due on February 11)

In **chapter one, exercise 2**, there are five main ideas you can annotate from "Buddha Taught Nonviolence." Make a list of these five annotations and turn them in. Subsequently, do the Microtheme Topic in chapter 2 for your own benefit. Read and

study the chapter, doing the exercises and checking your answers online where possible. **Turn in Review 1. Make sure you number your answers. There are two answers for each of the twenty questions.** Revise your micro theme for your own benefit.

Week 3 (due February 19)

Read chapter 14. **Turn in exercises 1, 2, and 3.** Be creative and just do the best you can to convey your clustering for exercise 3. Read chapter 15. **Turn in exercise 5—a topic sentence and outline** for the topic you chose in exercise 1 of chapter 14. Review Writer's Guidelines for chapter 14 and 15.

Week 4 (due February 25)

Do the Microtheme Topic in chapter 3 for your own benefit. Read and study chapter 3, doing the exercises and checking your answers. **Turn in Review 3 of chapter 3.** Revise your micro theme for your own benefit.

Week 5 (due March 3)

Read and work through chapter 16. **Turn in exercise 4**, a paragraph, providing both the rough draft and your final draft. Make sure they are correctly labeled. This exercise should be one fully developed paragraph. It is the culmination of the writing process you have been studying so far in the class, so it should be your best work.

Week 6 (due March 10)

Do the Microtheme in chapter 4 for your own benefit. Read and study the chapter and do the practice exercises, so that you will receive a good score on Review 3. **Turn in Review 3 from chapter 4.**

SPRING BREAK/EASTER HOLIDAY

Week 7 (due March 24)

Read chapter 17 and 18. Reread "My First Real Fire" by Tyson Burns and write a **narrative/descriptive essay** of your own based on reading-related topic number 11 from page 331 and turn it in. Pay close attention to the example essays provided and especially the Writer's Guidelines on page 333-334. Alternately, if a student has no work experience, he or she can write their essay on topic 8, based on John Updike's "A & P." This should be **two full pages**.

Week 8 (due March 31)

Read and work through **chapter 5** in preparation for turning in the combining sentences paragraph from **Review 3**.

Week 9 (due April 7)

Read and study chapter 6 closely. It is one of the most crucial chapters for writers at the college level. These sentence boundary errors are both the most common and the

most costly to students' grades in college writing. This chapter can be the difference between passing and failing classes for many students. Do the Microtheme for your own benefit, if you have found it educational so far. Do the exercises. **Turn in Review 1 of chapter 6.** Also, take advantage of the Online Teaching Center. *Go online to college.hmco.com/students and click on Select Your Course Area, then English, then Composition, then e-Exercises, then Sentences and Sentence Problems, and then do the practice tests on run-ons, comma splices, and fragments there. You will get immediate feedback on how well you are doing.*

Week 10 (due April 14) **Spring Is in the air!!**

Read chapter 19 and then take a close look at “When Cupid Aims at the Workplace.” I know I have lots of examples of human sexuality in the workplace that I have seen or experienced. I’ve had women plop down on my lap or tease me with flirtatious behavior in a variety of modes and manners. I’ve never been involved in a serious case of sexual harassment, but some of you no doubt have. What has been your experience of human sexuality and how it functions or it curtailed in the workplace setting? Though this essay is an exemplification essay and I do want your best examples in vivid detail, some of the most specific examples are often discovered when a writer tells a story (narrative) or describes an object (descriptive), so this essay will likely combine more than one rhetorical approach to the writing, as most great writing does! **Turn in a two page essay on your experiences of human sexuality in the workplace or public places.**

Week 11 (due April 21)

Read and work through chapter 10 on balancing sentence parts. Once you understand the concept of parallel construction, you can turn in **Review 2 of chapter 10.**

Week 12 (due April 28)

Read and study chapter 11. The exercises in this chapter will prepare you for Review 2.

Check your mastery of each area before attempting the Review. Do pay attention to the topic in parentheses when you do the following Review. **Turn in Review 3 of chapter 11.**

Week 13 (due May 5)

In keeping with our theme of human sexuality in the workplace, and since it is still spring, read chapter 21 and focus on the essay “Study Says Flirtatious Women Get Fewer Raises” and write an essay of two pages on one or more of the topics on page 395 (topics 6-10). State what topic(s) you will cover as a heading to the essay and do draw upon your own experience if you can. Study and interpret the causes and effects. **Turn in Flirtatious Women in Workplace essay (though you may very well be writing about flirtatious men!).**

Week 15 (due May 12)

Read chapter 23. Reread John Gray's "Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus" and write a two paragraph reaction that makes a connection between his ideas and your life experience. Your connection can show either where his ideas fit with your experience or where his ideas do not fit with your experience. Use specific examples to convey this connection to the text. One to two pages should suffice.

Week 16 (due May 19)

Read and study **chapter 24**. Turn in your solution to **exercise 2**, Finding Patterns in Photos from page 442. You do **not** need to write a paragraph or essay—just fill in the blanks and send that to me.

Week 17 (due May 27)

Read and study chapter 24 on argumentative essays. Consider the components of argument and be wary of logical fallacies. Turn in a two to three page **argument essay** based on a topic **you choose from pages 457-460**. **As always, make sure your work is your own original creation. Plagiarized assignments get zero points.**

Practical Information

All essays should be double-spaced, size 12 font, with Ariel or Times New Roman type.

Most students attach their assignments to an email message and send them to me with

English 50 or the assignment name in the subject line so I don't think it is SPAM.

Students with difficulty attaching documents, copy their assignment into the email text

box and send that to me. This causes some assignments to lose formatting. If you have

Windows Vista, that is okay for my college computer, but when I work at home, I can't

read it, so you may want to consider also pasting your work to ensure more efficient

grading. Students who have difficulty with email use the postal service (snail mail) to

send their work (okay, one student did this one time, but it is rare and not an efficient way

to take a course). TCI students use the instructional aide courier system that places work

in my folder in the library. Make sure I know which topic you chose for your essays and

do remember to put your name on the work, as well as the email message, so there will be

no mistakes in recording grades. **Plagiarism (using the work or ideas of others**

without properly giving them credit in your text) results in zero points. A repeat

offense will be reported to the Dean of Instruction. Well, that should get us started on an excellent semester.

Looking forward always—Bill Devine